

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 SAM-01

ACDA-07 OMB-01 /073 W

----- 023111

R 211537Z JUN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7489

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 4140

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY: A MOOD OF QUIET CONFIDENCE PREVAILS IN THE EANES CAMP AS THE CAMPAIGN ENTERS THE FINAL WEEK. BARRING UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS, IT LOOKS LIKE EANES ON THE FIRST ROUND. OTELO SHOULD CUT INTO THE NORMAL COMMUNIST ELECTORATE. PATO AND AZEVEDO STAND TO BE THE BIG LOSERS. AN ABNORMALLY LARGE ABSTENTION RATE, HOWEVER, COULD HURT EANES. END SUMMARY.

1. CAMPAIGN ATMOSPHERE: AS THE CAMPAIGN ENTERS THE FINAL WEEK THE TEMPO HAS PICKED UP. CAMPAIGN RHETORIC, PARTICULARLY BY AZEVEDO SUPPORTERS, HAS BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE. THE INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE LAST WEEK, CULMINATING IN THE DEATH IN EVORA JUNE 17, HAVE ADDED A SPECIAL NOTE OF TENSION
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AS THE CAMPAIGN MOVES TO ITS JUNE 27 CONCLUSION. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CANDIDATES, THE RACE SHAPES UP AS FOLLOWS:

(A) EANES: A MOOD OF QUIET CONFIDENCE PREVAILS IN THE EANES CAMP. BACK-BITING AND JOCKEYING FOR ADVANTAGE AMONG THE PARTIES SUPPORTING EANES CONTINUES. AND SOME EANES INSIDERS, MOST NOTABLY PPD AND CDS MEMBERS, HAVE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT LARGE-SCALE ABSTENTIONS COULD PREVENT A FIRST-ROUND VICTORY. BUT SOARES'S REAFFIRMATION OF WHOLE-HEARTED SOCIALIST SUPPORT FOR EANES HAS CLEARED THE AIR AND CONFIRMED THE PECKING ORDER IN THE EANES ORGANIZATION. EANES ALSO ENJOYS STRONG MEDIA SUPPORT; HE IS PICKING UP MOMENTUM.

(B) AZEVEDO: THE AZEVEDO CAMPAIGN HAS FAILED TO JELL. AZEVEDO STAFFERS CONTINUE TO EXUDE CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC BUT ARE PESSIMISTIC IN PRIVATE. THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OWN DISORGANIZATION; THEY ARE CLEARLY DISCOURAGED. AZEVEDO HIMSELF SEEMS MORE AND MORE ERRATIC. IN PART THIS REFLECTS HIS STRATEGY OF SEEKING TO DRAW EANES INTO A DEBATE ON PERSONALITIES. BUT EANES'S CONTINUED ALOOFNESS ONLY POINTS UP AZEVEDO'S LACK OF CONTROL.

(C) PATO: THE CHOICE OF THE PCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE LOOKS AND SOUNDS LIKE AN UNCOMFORTABLE MAN DISCHARGING AN UNWANTED OBLIGATION. DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS EFFICIENCY, THE PATO CAMPAIGN HAS FAILED TO GENERATE MUCH ENTHUSIASM. UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF EXPERTS A POTENTIALLY ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO AN UNINTERESTING PRODUCT OF COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP. ONLY THE THREAT OF OTELO ON THE LEFT SEEMS TO BREAK THE MONOTONY OF IT ALL.

(D) OTELO: FOR A MAN CONCEDED TO HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING, OTELO IS CONDUCTING A STRONG CAMPAIGN. HE SEEMS TO RESPOND TO THE CROWD. HE ADORES AGAIN BEING THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. HIS CAMPAIGN IS WELL ORGANIZED AND ATTRACTIVELY PACKAGED. HE COMES ACROSS WELL ON TV AND IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES. AND, IN LISBON AT LEAST, HE IS STILL THE FRONT-RUNNER IN THE POSTER COMPETITION.
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2. CAMPAIGN THEMES: THE PRINCIPAL THEMES OF THE CONTENDERS ARE NOW APPARENT.

(A) EANES:

-- EANES IS THE CONSENSUS CHOICE OF BOTH THE ARMED FORCES AND THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES; ONLY EANES CAN ENSURE THE DISCIPLINE AND COHESION OF THE ARMED FORCES AND EFFECTIVE POLITICAL PLURALISM.

-- EANES WILL GUARANTEE LAW AND ORDER: "LIBERTY IN SECURITY" IS THE EANES CAMPAIGN SLOGAN.

-- BUT EANES IS ALSO ABOVE PARTY; HE IS THE ONLY
CONTENDER WHO ACTS LIKE A PRESIDENT RATHER THAN A
CANDIDATE.

(B) AZEVEDO: THE THRUST OF THE AZEVEDO CAMPAIGN IS
DIRECTED AGAINST EANES.

-- EANES SAYS HE IS ABOVE PARTY, BUT HE IS THE HAND-
PICKED CANDIDATE OF THE POLITICIANS. EANES IS NOT HIS
OWN MAN.

-- EANES WAS A BELATED SUPPORTER OF THE APRIL 25
REVOLUTION. OTELO SHOULD KNOW, AND HE SAYS EANES DID
NOT PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE.

-- AN APPEAL TO HIERARCHY: VICE ADMIRAL AZEVEDO HAS
THE MATURITY AND EXPERIENCE TO DO THE JOB; LIEUTENANT
COLONEL (SIC) EANES LACKS THESE QUALITIES.

(C) PATO:

-- A VOTE FOR PATO IS THE ONLY TACTICAL VOTE AVAILABLE
TO THE LEFT.

-- A VOTE FOR PATO IS A VOTE FOR A FUTURE PS-PCP
COALITION: FOR A MAJORITY OF THE LEFT OVER THE HEADS
OF A MISGUIDED SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERSHIP.
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-- A VOTE FOR PATO WILL PERMIT THE PCP, THE PARTY OF THE
WORKING CLASS, TO BUILD ON ITS SOLID SHOWING IN THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

(D) OTELO:

-- OTELO IS TRULY A MAN OF APRIL 25.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JUN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LISBON04140
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760240-0196
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197606112/baaaesoc.tel
Line Count: 149
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: ASSESSMENT
TAGS: PINT, PO, (EANES, ANTONIO DOS SANTOS RAMALHO)
To: STATE INFO BONN
LONDON
MADRID
MOSCOW
OPORTO
PARIS

PONTA DELGADA
NATO
DIA
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006